

NPARL celebrates ARS' 50th Anniversary

The USDA-ARS Northern Plains Agricultural Research Laboratory in Sidney, MT hosted a special "Decades Party" Thursday, Nov. 6, in honor of the 50th Anniversary of its parent agency, the Agricultural Research Service. The event included booth displays featuring ARS discoveries by decade at the national and local levels, along with additional information on what else was happening in the world at that time. NPARL employees sitting the booths also joined in the fun by dressing in the fashions of their favorite decade.

A good crowd enjoyed their trip down memory lane, with visitors lined up to read posters for each decade and chat with booth representatives, while others enjoyed refreshments including a special anniversary cake.



USDA-ARS Northern Plains Agricultural Research Laboratory

- Agricultural Systems Research Unit
- Pest Management Research Unit



United States Department of Agriculture
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NPARL Technician Laura Senior, wearing a classic 60s party dress, chats with booth visitors about ARS activities in that decade. Display items included information on a new life form – viroids – discovered by ARS scientists in 1962, as well as local wind erosion research work done by Sidney ARS scientists. The 60s booth also included information on the 1963 groundbreaking and 1965 dedication of the original ARS facility in Sidney and a vintage Barbie doll, just for fun.



NPARL Technician Mark Gaffri discusses the finer points of soil testing with visitors to his 80s booth. In addition to the soil testing demonstration, the booth also featured information on the biological control of leafy spurge using flea beetles and the introduction of the NW-63 Small Red Bean, the most widely grown red bean cultivar in the U.S.



NPARL Technician Deb Waters, dressed in 50s fashion with rolled-up jeans and a white t-shirt, greets two young visitors to her booth. It included items such as DEET insect repellent, instant potato flakes and frozen orange juice, just some of the inventions or improvements discovered by ARS scientists in that decade. In addition, the booth featured a poster outlining ARS' 1950s biocontrol work, including the highly successful screwworm effort which developed the "sterile male" technique for pest population control still in use today.

In addition to the Nov. 6th Open House, NPARL also marked ARS's 50th Anniversary with an in-house potluck luncheon on Nov. 3. Employees, their families and NPARL Focus Group members braving the snow viewed a special video-taped message from ARS Acting Administrator Ed Knipling during the noon-hour, and then posed for posterity in this group picture to be sent to the national ARS office in Beltsville, MD.